

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in this application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

Claims 1 to 10. (Canceled).

11. (Currently Amended) A method for controlling at least one operating variable of an electrolytic bath, comprising:

ascertaining a concentration of at least one ionic bath component, including at least one of (a) coating metal ions in a process bath and (b) foreign ions in a rinse bath;

processing concentration values in a control device into control variables of a control element; and

changing the operating variable by the control element in accordance with setpoint inputs;

wherein the concentration is ascertained in the ascertaining step by withdrawing a sample from the bath, exciting the sample by electromagnetic radiation and analyzing a spectrum of light emitted by the sample.

12. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 11, further comprising supplying the sample via a line to at least one sample container.

13. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 12, wherein the supplying step includes successively filling a plurality of sample containers with the sample, the method further comprising carrying the sample containers past a spectroscopic measurement device.

14. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 11, further comprising supplying several samples onto a sample plate and carrying the samples past a spectroscopic measurement device by rotating the sample plate.

15. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 11, wherein the sample is excited optically.

16. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 11, wherein the sample is excited optically by a laser beam.

17. (Currently Amended) A device for controlling at least one operating variable of at least one electrolytic bath, comprising:

an arrangement adapted to ascertain a concentration of at least one ionic bath component, including at least one of (a) coating metal ions in a process bath and (b) foreign ions in a rinse bath;

a setpoint adjustment device for the operating variable;

an open-loop and closed-loop control device connected to the arrangement and to the setpoint adjustment device, the control device including a control element adapted to change the operating variable; and

a device adapted to transmit at least one sample of the bath to the arrangement;

wherein the arrangement includes a laser directed onto the sample and a spectral analysis device adapted for spectral analysis of light emitted by the sample.

18. (Previously Presented) The device according to claim 17, wherein the device adapted to transmit the at least one sample includes a pipeline system in an electroplating plant having several baths.

19. (Previously Presented) The device according to claim 17, further comprising at least one pipe having an intake end immersed into a corresponding one of the baths and an outlet end arranged at a rotatable sample plate that is partially located in a radiation range of the laser.

20. (Previously Presented) The device according to claim 19, further comprising a device adapted to remove analyzed samples from the sample plate.

21. (Currently Amended) A device for controlling at least one operating variable of at least one electrolytic bath, comprising:

means for ascertaining a concentration of at least one ionic bath component, including at least one of (a) coating metal ions in a process bath and (b) foreign ions in a rinse bath;

means for adjusting a setpoint of the operating variable;

open-loop and closed-loop control means connected to the ascertaining means and the adjusting means;

means for changing the operating variable; and

means for transmitting at least one sample of the bath to the ascertaining means;

wherein the ascertaining means includes laser means directed onto the sample and means for spectral analysis of light emitted by the sample.